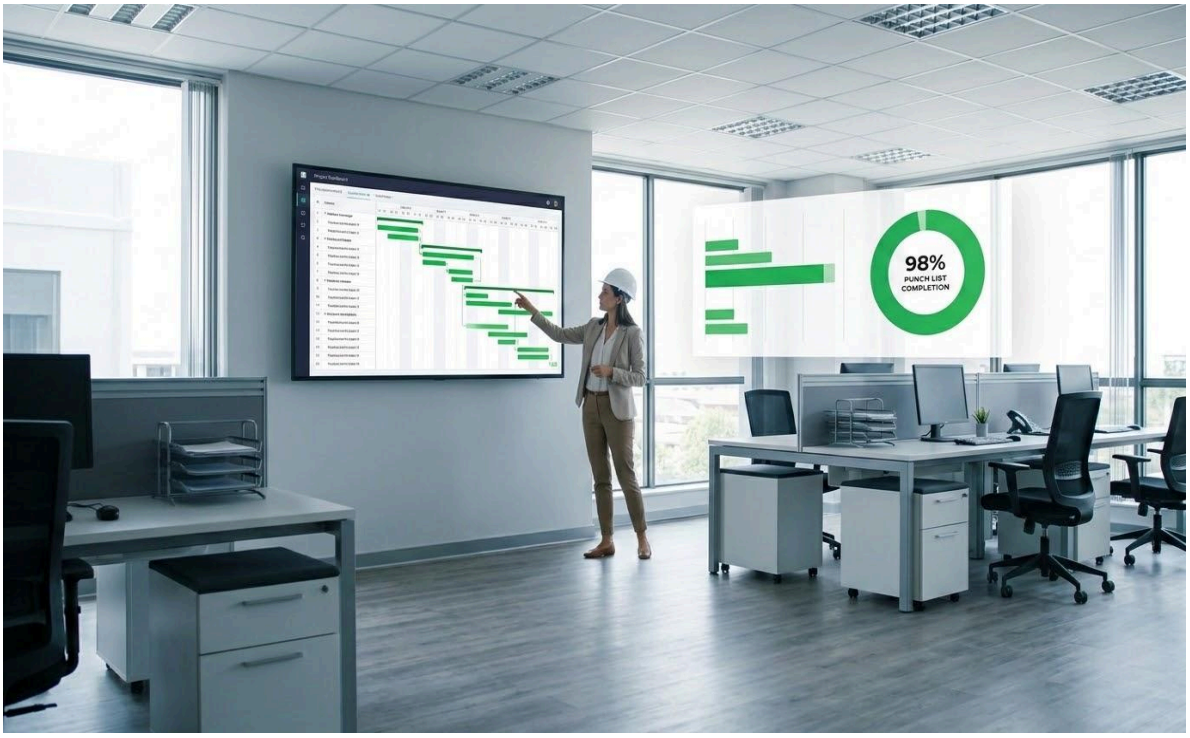
How FF&E Punch Lists Keep Office Build-Outs On Schedule



Most office build-out delays trace back to the last 5 percent of the project, not the first 95. Furniture arrives in the wrong sequence, vendors deliver damaged items, and the install crew runs out of work because the next batch is still in transit. A disciplined punch list catches all of this before move-in day.

The reason punch lists matter is leverage. A list signed by the contractor, owner, and install lead creates one shared definition of done, which protects everyone from the small disputes that pile up at the end of a project.

This article walks through what belongs on the punch list, who owns each section, how procurement timing affects field issues, and how to run the final walk so the office opens on schedule.

Key Takeaways

- Punch lists capture the last 5 percent of work where most office delays actually live.
- A signed list creates one shared definition of done across owner, GC, and install lead.
- Procurement timing controls field problems more than install crew skill does.
- Final walks should follow a written sequence, not a casual sweep.
- Strong vendor coordination cuts punch list items by half on most office projects.

What Belongs on an Office Punch List

Furniture placement and orientation lead the list. Workstations facing the wrong way, conference tables pushed off-center, and credenzas blocking outlets all show up on day one.

FF&E installation teams should walk every room with the floor plan and verify alignment before signing off.

Damage and missing parts come second. A scratched table leg, a missing keyboard tray, or a broken chair caster is small individually but stacks up fast. Each item gets logged with photos and a vendor reference, so the warranty path stays clean.

Mechanical and electrical integration matters too. Power and data poles need to land at the right desk positions, monitor arms need to clear ceiling fixtures, and adjustable desks need to actually adjust through their full range without snagging on cables.

Cleanliness and trash removal close the list. Empty boxes, plastic wrap, and packing debris cannot stay in the space at handover. Most install contracts include disposal, but the punch list confirms it actually happened on the way out.

Who Owns Each Section

The owner or owner's rep typically signs the final acceptance, but they do not write the punch list alone. The general contractor, install lead, and FF&E procurement manager each contribute the items they see from their vantage point.

The general contractor handles structural and mechanical items, including any drywall touch-ups caused by the install crew. They also coordinate with the install team on access, freight elevator scheduling, and security passes during the move-in week.

The install lead handles furniture-specific items: alignment, damage, missing parts, and assembly defects. FF&E procurement records cross-reference each item back to the purchase order, which speeds up vendor replacement requests.

The owner adds the final 10 percent of items that only show up once people walk the space looking at it as users, not as builders. These are often subjective, but they matter for the experience employees have on day one.

How Procurement Timing Drives Field Issues

Most punch list problems start in procurement, not installation. Orders placed late lead to substitutions, substitutions lead to fit issues, and fit issues lead to install crews making field calls without authority. The punch list grows from there.

The fix is straightforward but disciplined. Procurement should issue purchase orders 12 to 16 weeks before install date, confirm production schedules with each vendor monthly, and verify delivery details two weeks out. The few hours spent on these check-ins save days of field rework.

Damage during transit is the second procurement-driven issue. FF&E procurement teams that specify white-glove freight, with inspection at receipt, catch damage at the warehouse rather than the install site. The warranty path is also faster from a warehouse than a job trailer.

When timelines compress, FF&E installation crews are sometimes asked to install items that arrived without inspection. This is the riskiest move in any office build-out. Each uninspected pallet adds punch list items that could have been caught a week earlier at receiving.

Running the Final Walk

The final walk should follow a written sequence, room by room, not a casual sweep. The walk team carries the floor plan, the FF&E schedule, and a tablet for photos. Each room is signed off before moving to the next, which prevents items from being missed in long projects.

Standard walk team is the owner's rep, the install lead, and the GC superintendent. The FF&E procurement manager joins by phone or video for any items that need vendor judgment in the moment. This keeps the walk moving without missing technical detail.

Findings get logged with location, item description, photo, and proposed resolution. The list is shared the same evening, with target completion dates assigned. Resolution within 48 hours on routine items, with longer windows only when replacement parts are required.

A second walk confirms the punch list is resolved. This shorter visit catches anything missed or any new damage during touch-up work. The space is signed off only after the second walk passes, which protects the warranty path on every item installed.

Conclusion

Office build-outs end the way they end because the last 5 percent gets the focus or it does not. A disciplined punch list, owned across the project team, and supported by tight FF&E installation and The procurement coordination, is the single biggest determinant of whether the space opens on schedule.

For owners and project managers planning an office build-out or running a punch list this quarter, reach out to **Pure Logistic Services** for FF&E coordination support across the install and procurement workflow.

FAQs

How long should a punch list take to close out?

Most office punch lists close within 5 to 10 business days. Replacement parts can extend specific items, but the bulk of the list should resolve in the first week after the final walk.

Who pays for damage found on the punch list?

Responsibility usually maps to whichever party caused the damage. Vendor damage routes through the manufacturer warranty. Install damage falls on the install contractor. The procurement records make this attribution clear.

Can the office occupy before the punch list closes?

Sometimes, with owner approval. Critical safety items must resolve first, but minor cosmetic items can sometimes carry into the first week of occupancy if the work does not disturb employees.

What is the most common punch list item on office The installation projects?

Damaged or scratched furniture leads the list, usually from transit. Catching damage at receiving rather than install is the cheapest way to reduce this category on every project.

How does Sourcing work timing affect the punch list?

Late orders force substitutions, and substitutions create field fit problems. Procurement that runs 12 to 16 weeks ahead of install reduces punch list volume by a large margin on most office build-out projects.